

Waterbeach Community Land Trust Proposal - Ian Bracey

Aim:

Form a Waterbeach Community Land Trust (CLT) with the aim of providing affordable housing for the village as well as community facilities and giving all the village residents a way to steer development for the benefit of the village.

Purpose of CLT:

A CLT is a charity group owned by the community, run by the community, for the benefit of the community. Everyone in the village can be a member, and everyone has a say in what the CLT tries to do. A CLT scheme can deliver affordable, CLT owned homes in perpetuity, and community facilities. The group would also be able to set its own allocation policy to prioritise those living or working in the village or with a local connection.

With all the potential development taking place around Waterbeach, having our own CLT, along with the Neighbourhood Plan, would give us the opportunity to steer how the village develops. It would give us the chance to develop in a way sympathetic to the style of the village, with good quality houses for families and interesting design and architecture. A CLT can help with affordable rent, shared ownership, plots for self-build, group self-build, purchase at cost, resale price covenants and many other options we could look at, as well as developing community facilities too. We could also aim to identify the needs of the village community and try to meet them.

Progress and Additional Information:

- Website set up at www.waterbeachclt.co.uk with additional information about how CLTs work and what they can do. Contact email at info@waterbeachclt.co.uk
- Establishing facebook group at www.facebook.com/groups/waterbeachclt/ and twitter at @waterbeachclt
- Article written and published in the February edition of the Beach News outlining how I want to start a CLT and what the benefits would be, trying to raise awareness
- I have met with the Neighbourhood Plan group and they are supportive of my aim to try and start a CLT, I have also been asked to champion the "Housing" theme of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Number of emails of support from local people I have discussed with so far
- Grant funding is available from CLTEast and SCDC for the purpose of setting up a CLT. Technical advisors and support are also available.

Proposed Parish Council Support:

- I would like a vote of support from the Parish Council for exploring setting up a CLT for the village

Proposed Next Steps:

- Publicise idea of a CLT, raise awareness of the benefits
- Form a steering group to set out vision and plan
- Build up support from the community, develop a mailing list

- Hold a scoping event with CLTEast (the umbrella organisation for CLT) who can explain how CLTs work, what they can do and support the formal process of setting one up
- Legally incorporate CLT once show community support and establish steering group
- Launch the CLT formally and encourage everyone in the village to be a member so they can contribute their ideas and views
- Establish housing need in the village and plan how this could be met

Background:

With house prices being so high in the Cambridge area, owning a home is a challenge for young people in the village. Even with a good job and saving hard it can take a long time to build up a deposit. It is even more difficult if you are renting, indeed market rents themselves can be difficult to afford. I have lived in Waterbeach for my whole life, but can't afford to buy here. I know other young people in the same position. There isn't currently any help available for local people or those with a connection to the village to make a home here.

Availability of Land:

- While availability of land is important, at this stage I think establishing the principles of what a CLT could do and supporting them are the current aims, and I don't think not knowing where we could immediately build should stop us thinking a CLT is a good idea
- If we can first demonstrate that the community is in favour of a CLT and identify need we want to try and solve
- CLTEast can help with a call for land to see if there are any sites available in the area. Would also be interested to hear from anyone who might be interested to support with land

Other Local CLTs and Progress:

Other villages in the local area have been using Community Land Trusts to successfully develop their areas.

- Stretham and Wilburton are delivering 75 homes of which 30% will be for affordable rent at Manor Farm and have offered to meet with a steering group when set up.
www.strethamwilburtonclt.co.uk/
- Haddenham are preparing to build 54 homes at West End through their CLT.
www.haddenhamclt.org.uk/
- Cottenham have recently become the first village in South Cambs to form a CLT. They have also incorporated a CLT into their Neighbourhood Plan